

U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

Eastern District of Virginia

*Main Street Centre
600 E. Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219-2447*

*804/819-5400
Fax 804/771-2316*

For Release: October 31, 2002

*Contact: Susan Vick
(804) 819-5400*

NEWS RELEASE

Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, Nicholson Broughton, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration, Richmond Office, and Col. Andre Parker, Chief, Richmond Police Department, announced that yesterday evening, after a two-day trial, a federal jury convicted Frantz Michel, a.k.a. Freon, of conspiracy to distribute controlled substances. He will be sentenced on January 31, 2003, by the Honorable Henry Hudson, United States District Judge, at which time he faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Michel, age 31, a resident of Brooklyn, New York, ran a drug organization that operated in the City of Richmond between 1997 and 2000. Over that period, an average of three kilograms per month of both cocaine and heroin were transported to Richmond from New York City. Once in Richmond, the cocaine was converted to crack, and it along with heroin were then packaged for distribution.

Michel rarely visited Richmond, instead leaving the day-to-day management of the operation to associates and a large cast of street level distributors. The group sold drugs predominantly in the Fairfield Court neighborhood of Richmond.

Michel was indicted in the Eastern District of Virginia in 2000, but remained a fugitive for approximately two years. He was ultimately arrested in Brooklyn in the Spring of 2002.

The case was investigated by agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Richmond Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Nicholas S. Altimari is prosecuting the case for the United States.